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SUBJECT: HOLY SEE CONCERNED BY US-INDIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION, IRAN

REF: VATICAN 0029

CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher Sandrolini, Deputy Chief of Mission,
EXEC, State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Ambassador discussed India and Iran with Holy See deputy foreign minister Parolin on March 15. Parolin was critical of the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement as an unhelpful signal (i.e., to Iran). While conveying the Holy See's deep concern over the present confrontation with Iran, Parolin pressed for caution in dealing with Iran, and expressed worry about possible military conflict. End summary.

India

¶2. (C) Ambassador raised with Parolin recent Echo Chamber points on India civil nuclear cooperation agreement. Parolin questioned whether the deal could be considered a "good thing", making clear that he does not think so, in light of the Iran situation. He said the Holy See doubts the wisdom of this move, calling it a "wrong signal". The ambassador responded that "containment" deals like the India agreement, as well as other efforts at non-proliferation and "commercial only" solutions for nuclear fuels, offer the most practical and verifiable chance of reducing the unwarranted or malicious use of nuclear fuel or weapons.

Iran

¶3. (C) Ambassador suggested Iran should accept the Russian offer. Parolin emphasized the need for good signals in both directions on nuclear nonproliferation, as well as on nuclear disarmament; this would defuse tensions. (He appeared to be suggesting that US and other nuclear powers need to be more committed to reducing/eliminating nuclear stockpiles.) He described the Holy See's deep concern about the situation and alluded to a recent troubling article in the Italian daily *Il Corriere della Sera* (possibly thinking of a recent Washington Post article alleging that the USG intends to overthrow the Iranian regime, or to recent USG remarks on "consequences" to Iran of misbehavior). Ambassador noted that disarmament is great but perhaps idealistic, as opposed to focusing a united effort behind non-proliferation programs.

¶4. (C) The ambassador characterized Iran as unfit to have access to nuclear weapons. Parolin agreed, noting that Iran had not complied with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Still, he said confrontation should be avoided, and every effort should be made to find a way out of the situation. He asked the ambassador if he thought a peaceful solution was possible (the reply was yes). Parolin noted that Iranian opinion was solidly in favor of the current course, and observed that Iran has a right to a civilian nuclear program, as do all NPT members. The examples of Pakistan and India could not be overlooked. The entire international community should work together; there should be no

attempt to humiliate Iran. Parolin mused that conflict, such as airstrikes, would be truly terrible in Iran. Don't isolate Iran, he urged; open a dialogue. Ambassador agreed.

15. (C) Parolin recalled his February conversation (reftel) with DCM pointing out that the Holy See had told Iran to comply, to be transparent, to pursue confidence-building measures, and to consider a moratorium on uranium enrichment. Parolin urged the USG to multiply its contacts in Iran and strengthen civil society, especially moderates.

ROONEY